

To Weeping Mothers Whose Children Have Been Killed In Wars

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Weeping Willows by Monet

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I want to thank Ray McGovern for bringing Nikolai Nekrasov's poem, *Listening to the Horrors of War*, to my attention. Ray recently recited this poem in a video conversation he had with Ed Curtin. <https://www.globalresearch.ca/with-ray-mcgovern-for-the-community-church-of-boston/5860735> To extend the importance and impact of Nekrasov's poem (and Ray's referral to it), I have written this article.

In one of his greatest poems, entitled **Внимая ужасам войны** (*Listening to the Horrors of War*), Nikolai Alekseevich Nekrasov (1821-1878) expressed deep empathy for mothers whose

children have been killed in wars. In the final lines he offers the following image: Just as the weeping willow is unable to lift its leaf-laden branches, weeping mothers who have lost children in war are unable to lift their grief-laden arms and bowed heads.

We should keep this poem and image in mind as we listen to the continued horrors of war occurring throughout the world---wars not just between governments and nations, but also wars against Humanity itself---wars that do not just kill soldiers, but also kill innocent children and their mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends---wars that not only kill humans, but other living things and the earth itself---wars that could have been prevented but have been allowed---Wars that must immediately stop and not be repeated!

Внимая ужасам войны

Внимая ужасам войны,
При каждой новой жертве боя
Мне жаль не друга, не жены,
Мне жаль не самого героя.
Увы! утешится жена,
И друга лучший друг забудет;
Но где-то есть душа одна –
Она до гроба помнить будет!
Средь лицемерных наших дел
И всякой пошлости и прозы
Одни я в мир подсмотрел
Святые, искренние слезы –

То слезы бедных матерей!
Им не забыть своих детей,
Погибших на кровавой ниве,
Как не поднять плакучей иве
Своих поникнувших ветвей...

Translation of the last 5 lines:

Those are the tears of poor mothers!
They will not forget their children,
Killed during bloody wars,
Just as a weeping willow is not able to raise
Its drooping branches...

Below is another painting of the Weeping Willow, by Monet---one that is more poignant:



Below are two other translations of Nekrasov's poem:

In War

Hearing the terrors of the war, sore troubled,
By each new victim of the combat torn—
Nor friend, nor wife I give my utmost pity,
Nor do I for the fallen hero mourn.
Alas! the wife will find a consolation.
The friend by friend is soon forgot in turn.

But somewhere is the one soul that remembers—

That will remember unto death's dark shore,
Nor can the tears of a heart-stricken mother
Forget the sons gone down on fields of gore.
One soul there is that like the weeping willow
Can never raise its drooping branches more.

Absorbing War's Horror

The horror of each taken life
Each victim of a bloody battle
I do not pity friend or wife
The fallen, sacrificial cattle...
Alas, a wife's grief will subside
The memory of friends will perish
But there's a soul that can't abide
So long as she's alive, she'll cherish!
In our hypocrisy filled years
Prosaic and profane existence
I've seen but one pure source of tears
The tears of mothers, their insistence
On holding memory at bay
They can't forget, not for a day
Their fallen sons, wet grass their pillow
Just as the mournful, weeping willow
Can't lift its branches, in its way...

Nekrasov's poetry is particularly relevant to two horrible wars that are currently killing innocent people---women and children, in particular---the war in Ukraine and the war in Israel.

The best way to stop current wars and prevent new ones is for the general public to: critically examine the history that leads to war, including critical examination of the social beliefs, promoted narratives, and actual behaviors of those who have been allowed to ascend to positions of great power and have been allowed to start wars; engage in respectful, informed, and informing dialogue about the above history, beliefs, narratives, and behaviors; participate in peaceful mass protest against war and empire-building; democratically prevent proponents of "The Mean Arrangements of Man" from ascending to positions of power; and participate in the creation and promotion of new "Kind Social Arrangements" (Social Beauty).

For an example of the above approach to stopping war, the reader is referred to the following article, which was written during the two weeks immediately following the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022: <https://notesfromthesocialclinic.org/an-analysis-of-the-situation-in-ukraine/>

Unfortunately, the majority of the American public, particularly their governmental leaders and conventional media, have failed to critically examine the Ukraine situation. This has led to at least \$175 billion dollars being spent (by the US alone) on continuation of a preventable war that has taken the lives of tens of thousands of soldiers on each side and has killed at least 10,000 Ukrainian civilians, including hundreds of innocent children. This war threatens to escalate into WWII and potential nuclear holocaust. It is a war that has been **allowed**. It is a war that can be stopped, if the general public were to engage in critical examination, dialogue, protest, and promotion of “Kind Social Arrangements” to replace “The Mean Arrangements of Man.”

But, alas, that examination, dialogue, protest, and thoughtfulness has not occurred on the scale needed. For that, the Willow and Mothers weep.

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Regarding the English translations of the Nekrasov poem:

The translation of the last 5 lines is based on a translation provided in the following link: <https://turbostyle.ru/en/kia/analiz-stihotvoreniya-n-a-nekrasova-vnimaya-uzhasam-voiny-nikolai-alekseevich.html>

The first full-poem translation is provided in the following link: https://www.poemhunter.com/nikolay-alekseyevich-nekrasov/ebooks/?ebook=0&filename=nikolay_alekseyevich_nekrasov_2004_9.pdf

The second full-poem translation and the full-poem in Russian are provided in the following link: <https://allpoetry.com/poem/15999447-Translation--Absorbing-War-s-Horror-by-Nikolai-Nekrasov-by-Agee>



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